



Home Buyout is the Best Option

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Mower County, Minnesota

Austin, MN - After Richard and Helen Johnson were flooded the first time, they knew that participating in the City's buyout project was the best option for them. They waited patiently. When they were offered a buyout of their flood prone home, they were thrilled.

Following the 2000 flood, funding became available for the purchase of their home. After being flooded in 1978, 1993, 1997 and 2000, Richard said "the buyout was a wonderful opportunity to better our situation. "



The City of Austin has completed over 200 property buyouts since 1978 with funds from FEMA, the State of Minnesota and the City. These buyouts have saved millions of dollars in flood damage. After the 2000 flood, the City utilized Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program funds to acquire 39 residential properties in the Cedar River floodplain, including the Johnsons' home. The Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Austin administered the FMA project on behalf of the City.

FEMA and State of Minnesota Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) returned to the area in September of 2004 when the Cedar River flooded again. This time Richard and Helen felt fortunate to be high and dry. "If we had still been in the floodplain, this last flood would have come in through the first floor windows and substantially damaged our home," said Richard.

Buyout projects have become a well-received mitigation measure to permanently remove people out of harm's way. In the case of the Johnsons, they felt very satisfied with their \$72,000 buyout offer and were able to purchase another home out of the floodplain in the same community. Helen said, "because we lived in a floodplain, we would not have been able to sell our home at a reasonable price." Richard added, "I feel that people should take advantage of the buyout program when it is offered to them."

Now a park is being created in their former neighborhood. When they visit the area, they feel very lucky to have participated in the buyout. This time when the floodwaters were rising, the Johnsons could count their blessings and return to their safe, dry home. Helen sighed and said, "we would not have the strength to go through another flood."

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region V**

State: **Minnesota**

County: **Mower County**

City/Community: **Austin**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**
Hazard Type: **Flooding**
Activity/Project Type: **Acquisition/Buyouts**
Structure Type: **Wood Frame**
Activity/Project Start Date: **07/2000**
Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**
Funding Source: **Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)**
Funding Recipient: **Property Owner - Residential**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$72,000.00 (Actual)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal Disaster? **Yes**
Federal Disaster #: **1333 , 06/27/2000**
Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**
Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**
Year First Tested: **2004**
Repetitive Loss Property? **Yes**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: **<http://www.floodsmart.gov>**
Reference URL 2: **<http://www.co.mower.mn.us/Flood%20Info.htm>**

Main Points

- Home was repetitively flooded; 1978, 1993, 1997, and 2000.
- The City of Austin has completed over 200 home buyouts since 1978.
- Flood Mitigation Assistance Program funds helped the Johnson family move out of the floodplain into a new home in the community.
- A new park has been created at the site of their previous home.



Johnson home flooded in 2000



Johnsons in new flood-free home